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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 180th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York
on Monday, 7 October 1991, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mrs. DIALLO

(Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

2. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to elect Mr. Camilleri (Malta) Rapporteur of the Committee and Chairman of the Working Group.

3. It was so decided.

4. Mr. CAMILLERI (Malta) expressed appreciation to the members of the Committee for his election to the post of Rapporteur, which was recognition of his country's long-standing commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people. He pledged to do his best to continue the admirable tradition of his predecessors as the Committee entered a new stage in its work aimed at bringing about a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

REPORT ON THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL NGO SYMPOSIUM AND THE INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE HELD AT VIENNA FROM 26 TO 30 AUGUST 1991

5. The CHAIRMAN said that the European Regional NGO Symposium had been attended by 125 non-governmental organizations from Europe and other regions, including Israel and the occupied territories, 21 Member States, a specialized agency of the United Nations, two intergovernmental organizations and the delegation of Palestine. On behalf of the Committee she had strongly protested against the decision by the Israeli authorities to deny permits to two distinguished Palestinian experts, who had thus been prevented from participating and presenting papers. Nine prominent panelists and workshop leaders had made presentations. In accordance with the programme approved by the Committee, the theme of the Symposium had been "Time for Palestine - The role of Europe in Securing Palestinian Rights". Two panels and seven workshops had been organized in order to discuss and elaborate concrete strategies and activities.

6. The Symposium had adopted a final declaration reaffirming the support of the European NGOs for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East based on the exercise of Palestinian rights and calling on all European Governments to support the International Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation on an equal footing of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The declaration also called on European Governments to play a significant role in securing peace and to carry out effective political and economic measures to make Israel comply with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. In addition, the Symposium had endorsed the various recommendations by the workshops for concrete activities to be undertaken by the European NGOs.

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(The Chairman)

7. The International NGO Meeting had been attended by 207 non-governmental organizations, 28 Member States, 3 United Nations agencies, 2 intergovernmental organizations and the delegation of Palestine. Presentations had been made by 17 panelists and workshop leaders. The main theme of the International Meeting was "Palestine Now!". Three panels and six workshops had been organized so that the participants could explore specific issues in depth and develop common programmes of action for the future.

8. The participants in the Meeting had adopted a final declaration reaffirming their conviction that the conflict could be solved only through an International Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations at which all parties to the conflict, including Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing, were represented. The declaration unconditionally reaffirmed the rights of the Palestinian people and called for the immediate cessation of the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements as a precondition for any peace process. It also called for sanctions against Israeli occupation and for the establishment of United Nations machinery to provide protection for the Palestinian people and facilitate the exercise of their inalienable rights. In addition, the meeting had endorsed a number of political, action-oriented proposals and had elected a new International Coordinating Committee to promote international NGO activities in the coming year.

9. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer for Palestine) expressed satisfaction at the extensive report provided by the Chairman on the fruitful meetings held in Vienna.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to take note of the final declarations adopted at the European Regional NGO Symposium and the International NGO Meeting.

11. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

12. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that at its recent twentieth session, the Palestine National Council had adopted a major political statement taking a positive view of the steps to convene an International Peace Conference on the Middle East in order to achieve an overall settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the crux of which was the question of Palestine. The Council had been flexible with regard to all the issues raised without renouncing the basic objectives and principles on which it had based the struggle of the Palestinian people. The peace process underway stemmed from the position taken by the other parties, the United States and the Government of Israel, and it was hoped that they would take the necessary steps so that all the issues that were still pending could be resolved.

13. With regard to the overall efforts to bring about a political settlement in the Middle East, he pointed out that his delegation and the Group of Arab

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(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer, Palestine)

States were opposed to any attempt to rescind General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX), which determined that zionism was a form of racism. That position was based on their theoretical approach to zionism, legal considerations concerning the rescinding of resolutions and political and practical reasons pertaining to the peace efforts and current attempts to bring about a peaceful settlement. Although his delegation hoped to avoid any conflict or problems in the future, if need be, it would raise that matter again in the Committee and with various regional groups in order to ask for their support. At a later stage, his delegation would inform the Committee about what it had done at the previous session concerning the credentials of the Israeli delegation. The General Assembly, in endorsing those credentials, should clarify its position on the occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

14. The CHAIRMAN said that she had received the text of the declaration adopted at the twentieth session of the Palestine National Council, which would be made available to the members of the Committee. In that connection, she stressed that the Committee would step up its efforts to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.